

## REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to an Office Action mailed January 13, 2004. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the subject application as amended herein.

Claims 1-21 remain in the present application. Claims 22-24 have been added to the present application.

The Specification and claim 12 have been amended to correct previously undetected informalities. No new matter has been added.

The January 13, 2004 Office Action objected to the abstract. The abstract has been replaced. Applicant respectfully submits that the replacement abstract overcomes the objection.

The January 13, 2004 Office Action noted that corrected drawings were required. Replacement drawings are attached hereto as required.

In the January 13, 204 Office Action, claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicant has amended claim 5 to correct the error. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits amended claim 5 is patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

In the January 13, 2004 Office Action, claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,515,969 issued to Michael R. Smith (hereinafter "Smith"). As discussed below, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-21 are patentable over Smith.

Claim 1 includes:

A method comprising:

registering an attribute to a distributed dictionary for a plurality of nodes in a network having an unknown topology, said attribute comprising a key to index the attribute, a value associated with the key, and an incarnation identifier for the value.

In claim 1, without knowing the topology of a network, the claimed invention can still register attributes for the plurality of nodes in the network. This is accomplished by registering the attributes to a distributed dictionary. For an attribute to be registered in the distributed dictionary, the attribute includes a key to index the attribute, a value associated with the attribute, and an incarnation identifier for the value.

Smith, on the other hand, uses a registration protocol that relies on a known topology. That is, before disseminating network information, Smith first uses a spanning tree algorithm to define the "active topology" of the network (col. 2, lines 12-16). The registration protocol then relies on the active topology, also called a spanning tree, to register network attributes (col. 6, lines 9-12). Smith needs to establish the active topology before registering attributes in order to avoid having attributes caught in perpetual loops in the network (col. 2, lines 1-10).

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that Smith has nothing whatsoever to do with disseminating network information in a network with an unknown topology. In which case, Applicant respectfully submits that Smith does not suggest, disclose, or enable "registering an attribute ... for a plurality of nodes in a network having an unknown topology," much less an "attribute

comprising a key to index the attribute, a value associated with the key, and an incarnation identifier for the value," as claimed in claim 1.

Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over Smith.

Applicant submits that the reasoning presented above with respect to claim 1 similarly applies to claims 16 and 19. Thus, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 16 and 19 are likewise patentable over Smith.

Given that claims 2-15 depend from claim 1, claims 17 and 18 depend from claim 16, and claims 20 and 21 depend from claim 19, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-15, 17, 18, 20, and 21 are likewise patentable over Smith for at least the reasons discussed above.

New claims 22-24 depend from claims 1, 16, and 19. Therefore, for at least the reasons discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 22-24 are likewise patentable over Smith.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-24, as amended, are now in a condition for allowance, and Applicant respectfully requests allowance of such claims.

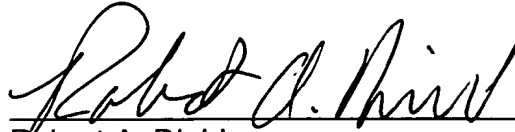
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Respectfully submitted,

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